

A Publication of The Pennsylvania Prison Society

GRATERFRIENDS

The mission of the Pennsylvania Prison Society is to advocate for humane prisons and a rational approach to criminal justice.

Dear Momma

Wayne P. Johnson AKA Lightman X, SCI Benner Township

Dear momma I never meant to break your
heart
By hangin' out in the dark
And I know I should have known better
Because you always told me to get my life
together
And watch the company that I keep
Before they find me dead in the streets
And the streets seem like what I have cho-
sen
But on this side it's real cold
Cold-hearted people that I deal with every
day
And now I understand why you told me
to pray
Pray for a new beginning at the end
Because my life was full of sin
Sin that I really thought was cool
But now I realize that I was a fool
A fool for not paying attention

When all you asked me to do was listen
Listen to you and respect others
Because even the Bible says listen to your
mother
Well mom I never meant to hurt you
"GOD" knows that I didn't
I just wish from the bottom of my heart
That I would have just listened
Listened when you cried out and begged
me to do better
So now mom I want you to know
That I'm getting my life together
No more hangin' out in the dark because
I'm smarter than that
And now I know to listen to you because
You got my back
So may God bless you and may you find
happiness and
Peace in every way
And I apologize to you for runnin' astray.
Happy Mother's Day!

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

The Prison Society wishes a happy Mother's Day to all mothers behind bars.

Above is a poem by Wayne Johnson dedicated to mothers.

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The opinions expressed are of the authors and not necessarily those of Graterfriends.

From the Social Services Director



Dear Friends of the Society,

The pandemic continues to linger and affect the lives of people both inside and outside of prison. We were thrilled to see the resumption of family visits earlier this year, but we know that many barriers exist when trying to connect with loved ones.

At the end of this issue, you will see a survey with questions relating to your experiences connecting with the people you care about through in person and video visits. This survey is being conducted in partnership with Temple University, and will help us better understand your experiences and hopefully identify ways to improve the process.

Because this survey is being conducted in partnership with an

academic institution, it is required that in addition to completing the survey, you will need to submit a consent form, which will preface the survey. Your responses will be kept confidential and de-identified.

Your responses to the COVID-19 and In-Unit Dining surveys were invaluable in helping uplift the realities of prison life and directly informed policy recommendations, news coverage, and public understanding. We hope that many of you will take the time to answer this survey as well.

Prison is isolating by design, and the Prison Society is committed to reducing that isolation and promoting connection and community wherever we can. Thank you for being a partner in this effort.

With gratitude,
Kirstin

Graterfriends

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Graterfriends is a publication from the Pennsylvania Prison Society.

We reserve the right to edit submissions. Original submissions will not be returned. Allegations of misconduct must be documented and statistics should be supported by sources. All submissions should be no more than 500 words, or two double-spaced pages. Letters more than 200 words, or one double-spaced page, will not be published in their entirety and may be shortened for clarity and space.

To protect Graterfriends from copyright infringement, please attach a note, on your submission, stating that you are the original author of the work and that you give us permission to edit and print; date and sign the declaration.

From the Pennsylvania Prison Society

The Pennsylvania Prison Society is the go-to ombudsman and advocate for incarcerated people in Pennsylvania. We promote the health, safety, and wellbeing of people in prison and their families. While we are not a legal organization — we do not provide legal advice nor take on legal cases — we offer an abundance of other resources to support those on the inside: deployment of prison monitors, social support, social services, public education, and advocacy. Graterfriends works to employ all of these strategies. Thank you for your endless support as we begin reworking our resources list and transparency on our abilities.

Expanding Assistance for Spanish and other Non-English Speakers *The Pennsylvania Innocence Project*

As you may know, the Pennsylvania Innocence Project works to exonerate those convicted of crimes they did not commit. The Project is eager to assist non-English speakers and especially Spanish speaking individuals. We are now able to communicate with incarcerated individuals directly in Spanish and other languages. Our website is offered in Spanish, and we have interpreters and translators on call so that we can more effectively communicate to better serve non-English speaking individuals.

The Project reviews cases of people in prison who are actually innocent. The Project only takes cases from individuals convicted in Pennsylvania state or federal court, where the convicted individual is innocent and had no role in the incident that led to the conviction. Further, the individual must have completed the appeal of their conviction and have at least 10 years of their sentence, probation, or parole remaining.

If you would like the Project to consider reviewing your case, please send us a short letter in the language you are the most comfortable with that explains the following:

1. What you were convicted of – what the charges were;
2. Whether there was a trial or whether you pled guilty/no contest (accepting plea deals is included in this);
3. Why you say you are innocent; and
4. Where you are in your appeals process.

Please send your letter to:

Pennsylvania Innocence Project
1515 Market Street, Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19102.

The letter must come from you, not a family member or friend. We look forward to hearing from you. Our website address is painnocence.org

Amplía la asistencia para hablantes de español y otras personas que no hablan inglés *El Pennsylvania Innocence Project*

Como tal vez sepa, el Pennsylvania Innocence Project (Proyecto Inocencia de Pensilvania) trabaja para absolver a personas condenadas por delitos que no cometieron. El Proyecto está entusiasmado con ayudar a personas que no hablan inglés, especialmente hispanohablantes. Ahora podemos comunicarnos con personas encarceladas directamente en español y en otros idiomas. Tenemos una versión en español de nuestro sitio web, y también tenemos intérpretes y traductores de guardia para poder comunicarnos de una manera más eficaz y servir mejor a las personas que no hablan inglés.

El Proyecto revisa los casos de personas encarceladas que en realidad son inocentes. Solo puede tomar casos de personas condenadas en el estado de Pensilvania o la corte federal que sean inocentes y que no tengan participación en el incidente que originó la condena. Además, estas personas deben haber terminado el proceso de apelación de su condena y deben quedarle al menos 10 años de condena, libertad condicional a prueba o libertad bajo palabra.

Si desea que el Proyecto revise su caso, envíenos una breve carta en el idioma en el que sienta mejor expresándose y en donde explique lo siguiente:

1. Por qué delito fue condenado, cuáles fueron los cargos;
2. Si hubo un juicio o si se declaró culpable/no impugnó (se aceptan los acuerdos para declararse culpable);
3. Por qué afirma que es inocente; y
4. En qué fase está su proceso de apelación.

Envíe su carta a:

Pennsylvania Innocence Project
1515 Market Street, Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Debemos recibir la carta de usted, no de un familiar o amigo. Esperamos tener noticias suyas pronto. La dirección de nuestro sitio web es painnocence.org



On the Medical Copay *Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project*

The Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project (PILP) supports the Prison Society and FAIM in their efforts urging the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) to end the \$5 medical copay for incarcerated people. The copay can be burdensome and may even deter some people from seeking medical care.

Even with the current copay system, you do not always have to pay a copay for every medical visit. What are your rights and options as an incarcerated person when faced with a copay for medical care?

Prisons are legally allowed to charge reasonable fees and copays for medical services provided to incarcerated people. In Pennsylvania's state prison system, the exact ins and outs of these fees are spelled out in the statute 37 Pa. Code § 93.12 and in DC-ADM 820.

Even though the DOC can generally charge a copay, there are certain medications or medical services where state law does not allow the DOC to charge a copay. For example, while the DOC can charge you a copay for a medical visit if you injure yourself while playing a sport during rec, they cannot charge you a copay for medical care if you are injured or become ill due to your prison work assignment. Below is the list of medical services and treatments for which you should not be charged a copay:

- medical treatment for a chronic disease or illness, or intermittent disease or illness;
- mental health treatment;
- assessment or medical screening you receive at intake or transfer;
- follow-up appointments scheduled by the DOC or an outside medical consultant;
- medical referral ordered by the DOC or an outside medical consultant;
- emergency medical care unless the injury was self-inflicted;
- lab tests, dressing changes, and EKGs;
- prenatal care for pregnant people;
- physical or dental exam scheduled by the DOC;
- infirmary care;
- hospitalization outside of a DOC prison;
- long-term due to age, illness, disease, injury, convalescence or physical or mental infirmity;
- care for an injury from your prison job;
- counseling, substance use groups, and other social programs.

You also should **not** be charged for:

- medication refills;
- psychotropic medications;
- eyeglass prescriptions and dentures;
- prosthetics (except customized prosthetics);
- immunizations for public health reasons;
- medication provided for public health reasons.

You should be informed *before receiving treatment* whether a fee will

be charged. If you do not have enough money in your inmate account at the time of the treatment, the DOC can still charge you the copay and expect repayment from you when you are able. However, if you do not sign the cash slip authorizing the co-pay, then you will not receive the non-emergency medical care.

If you were charged the copay and believe you should get a refund, you should file a grievance identifying the date on which you received care, noting that the care or medication you received does not qualify for the copay, and asking for a refund to your account.

Please note that PILP has previously challenged the DOC's \$5 copay, which was ruled to be legal. We do not intend to pursue another legal challenge. However, please let us know if you are seeing issues at your facility with people consistently being mischarged for non-eligible services. PILP also has a one-page info sheet on this topic which we can send to you at no cost.

Prison Monitor Requests

If you have a concern about your facility or need assistance, please reach out directly to the Pennsylvania Prison Society. We are able to send out trained, volunteer prison monitors to meet with you at your facility.

After we receive your request for a prison monitor, please allow some time for your ask to be processed. Once processed, your monitor will be able to visit, listen, problem-solve, and advocate on your behalf. We can assist in addressing issues like accessing medical care, facility conditions, and mistreatment. However, we are not attorneys and cannot help with legal matters. If you are unsure if a monitor can help, please still consider writing to the following address:

Pennsylvania Prison Society
230 South Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Deadline for Creative Issue

In order to get the creative issue out to our readers sooner this year (hopefully in time for the holidays), we are asking for all creative submissions to be mailed to us by **September 10th, 2022!**

You can write about anything, but we are particularly focused on topics related to the criminal justice experience.

You can still send in creative pieces after the deadline, but they will be considered for the 2023 issue.

Medical Copay Stories FAMM

The Prison Society and FAMM requested that people tell us about their experiences with the \$5 medical copay in Pennsylvania state prisons. What follows is a sampling of stories we received from people living behind bars and their loved ones that illustrate the negative impact of the medical copay.

Bolding has been added for emphasis. These stories have not been edited otherwise. First names are shortened for protection.

J. Hernandez:

My older brother has been incarcerated since 1995 has many times opted not to receive medical care because of that \$5 copay most times he'd rather save money for commissary or phone calls over that copay. I hope that one day that is completely eliminated so that prisoners do not have to choose medical over other necessities, especially phone calls to family which is what keeps them going and helps them with keeping their mental health in check.

G. Carol submitted on behalf of M. Starnes:

This is my mentee's story... So this is actually from **M. Starnes** who is incarcerated [at a different facility]: "The effects of Medical Copays are many and affect individuals in different ways. The most common of them are, us not being able to afford the copays. **Many people choose not to go to medical and to deal with medical issues on their own out of fear of being charged money they don't have in the first place, leaving their account in the negative.** Those who do go to medical are forced to use money that is needed for other reasons, such as cosmetics or food items from the commissary. We are not supposed to get charged twice for the same reasons, however, we do get charged over and over again in many situations. I was just charged for renewing my medication for chronic issues this week, this should not happen. Moreover, we are being charged for medical mistakes ex: I was told that in order to receive the proper medication and treatment for my foot and back injuries/disabilities I would have to participate in physical therapy. I was told I would be placed in physical therapy for said injuries/disabilities. I have yet to be placed in said therapy leaving me no other choice but to be seen by medical again. This is leaving me in further pain, prolonging what is said to be needed for my best interest and healthcare. Placing me in another situation to be charged again by medical for Chronic issues. This in itself is a stressful situation, not counting the pain and stress I deal with on a daily basis Physically, Mentally, and Spiritually. I bring this to your attention to make you aware of the copays and medical issues we face everyday." ~ Mark Starnes

M. Rogan:

From **M. Knight** our family friend: "**With the constant stress of worrying about medical Co-pays I find myself having to sacrificing my phone calls with my daughters which are near and dear to my heart** and quite frankly is not fair to them so then I am forced to make a even bigger choice do I go without food or soap so that I can still make calls to my daughters. Why must an inmate who has little to no money have to carry that burden you even have to pay for the phone calls to your family now I completely understand the three calls a day limit but why must I be burden with with such things if communication with one's family is such an important goal for the the DOC to afford their inmate population why not give them these thing things free of charge so unless there is a reason for this why do they do this to us. Those who have no money and no support or those with very little money at all try to maintain the DOCs medical copays. The only way they can pay the copays is with the little allowance the DOC gives each month. So little that it doesn't even cover the 17 dollars a month for cable. So how does one live? They can't because they continue to have their account in the red due to these outrageous copays. Things that should be covered by grants and tax payers money. Where does that money go I say? In their pockets? But one would never know because the DOC hides this information from the public. This process hinders the health and wellbeing of inmates. **We really need to take health into consideration and end the unneeded charge of medical copays because of these inmates that come into the DOC health leave in deplorable condition. These things such as cancer and diabetes also affect those with little money to be able to buy hygiene and care products to take care of themselves.** The DOC gives little money and food on trays therefore the inmate has to rely on the commissary. But how can one get commissary if they are paying these outrageous medical copays. I ask you to please help those behind the wall and put an end to these unneeded medical copays. You pay 5 dollars to be seen and an extra 5 per medication. If you put in a sick call for dental they charge you 10 dollars plus an additional 5 for any medication rendered. DOC has a criteria for Chronic Care but it's in the DOCs discretion what it considers chronic care."

J. Jones:

My husband has heart disease, hypertension, diabetes & high cholesterol on 6 meds for that. Not to mention the other meds for other things. Please drop the copay cost. It's hard enough attempting to keep them comfortable inside. It's not home & they're being punished but I feel as if I'm being punished as well. Every extra cent goes to calls, meds, cable, books etc. Not luxuries but things to keep them occupied. TVs now cost upwards of \$275. Every \$100 I send inside \$25 is automatically taken off the top. They end up with \$75. Glasses cost \$65. Keeping them just comfortable with basics is nearly impossible without going broke. I try my hardest but I have my son & husband both incarcerated. **My son doesn't want to take his ADHD & anxiety meds now because he doesn't want to pay a co-pay. Imagine your child choosing between commissary food or meds. It happened to us. Please I beg of you... help us help them.**

H. W. Gray:

Hello, my name is H. W. Gray, I am serving a life sentence. I've been housed here since January 27, 2004. Back then our medical copay was only \$2.00, and it covered the entire medical visit. **Now, as you already know, the copay has been raised to \$5.00. What you may not know is that they apply this \$5.00 copay multiple times for the same visit.** For example, in September 2019 I fell very ill and did not want to go to medical, but my block officer was concerned because of how sick I was. On the 10th day they sent me to medical. I was diagnosed with an illness that could be either pneumonia, or Bronchitis. But they didn't know. I believe today that it was COVID. But **they gave me a 7 day course of Amoxicillin, 2 Aspirin, and Nebulizer treatments every other day for 2 weeks. And charged me the \$5.00 copay for the visit, and an additional \$5.00 copay for each type of medication, so \$20.00.**

We work for anywhere from C.19/Hr to C.51/Hr. And the care provided is sub par. I go to this medical department as little as possible, not only because of the financial burden, but because the **care itself is based around their cost savings rather than my well being.** I'd rather die in my cell, completing my sentence of Life, than frustrated trying to fight these people to get proper health care. **I've accepted a lot of hard cold truths in here, and this was one of them. I've spent 20 years in prison. That's 20 years of walking on concrete and sleeping on a thin mattress on a sheet of steel. This life is hard on the body and also causes some of the medical issues that they charge us for.**

Anonymous:

Our son's story is fairly simple. **During the pandemic, he did not go to medical.** He did not know that the co-pay had been suspended, nor did others on his block. He experienced cold symptoms at one point and clear COVID symptoms including fever and loss of smell in another case, but did not go to medical. He also had recurring severe knee pain that he didn't go to medical for. This was both because of the co-pay and his suspicion that he would just be prescribed pain medication and would have to pay for it as well. ...like many other incarcerated people, [our son] didn't want to be seen as having COVID because he would go to "the hole" and it would put his cellmate and other close contacts on his block in danger of being similarly isolated.

G. Campbell, Sr.:

On four occasions I went up to Medical by way of sick-call. Each time I was asked for \$5 for using sick-call; \$5 for a (mis)diagnosis; and, \$5 for medicine for everything prescribed by the medical practitioner.

Tragically, there are people here who would rather risk dying themselves; or, in a worse case scenario, spreading a contagion throughout the prison than experience being charged the exorbitant co-pay fees. It is this that scares me the most. What they are doing amounts to terrorism and attempted murder. Between the misdiagnoses and the fear of the fees. **Prisoners live in abject fear.** If you can assist us, please do so. Towards that end, I remain ever hopeful!

L. Taylor:

As a mother of an inmate at SCI Houtzdale, and a Registered Nurse, I am writing to you concerning your reinstatement of medical copay fees for inmates, and to question why more than 50% of the correctional officers remain unvaccinated. additionally, i just made a 1,000 mile round trip from NC to NEPA to have a much-anticipated contact visit with my son, which was canceled at the last minute due to a brief lockdown of his unit (for an undisclosed reason), during which i stopped to visit family in the area. There are new pockets of increased infections in your state, of which I would hope you are aware...so I am writing to question your decision concerning copay fees, and to ask why there aren't mandatory vaccination mandates among your officers. **PLEASE consider reinstituting 'no copays',** and making vaccinations mandatory... since the pandemic is not at all under control.

M. Traupman:

Medical has been billing me to death, **either sick calls I did not request or billing me for meds I was told at intake at Phoenix SCI** back in January of this year I would have no co-pays or refill costs. Any grievance I have filed about the issue I get nothing but denial saying “sorry it’s past 15 days “you’re stuck with it” or any excuse they can find.

J. Sims:

It’s very tense... **The access to medical care is very limited. Medical staff are charging people the regular copay, even if they have flu-like symptoms.**

**Documentary: “Until We Have Faces”
Dr. Kathryn Whiteley, Ph.D., Film Producer**

I was born in Queensland Australia and have lived in central Pennsylvania for 15 years. I am a professor at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, and a Pennsylvania Prison Society Official Visitor. My professional and personal relationship with women incarcerated for murder began 17 years ago, when I was completing my dissertation in Australia.

Since then, I have had the passion and opportunity to travel to women’s maximum-security prisons within the United States, Australia and Ireland to individually interview many women incarcerated for murder. My research focus, which I frame as “their story telling,” encapsulates the essence of their lives, past and present through their words, their voice.

This small imprisoned cohort of women rarely receive the opportunity to be heard. Often, they are dehumanized as opposed to humanized. I continue to write, send cards and visit many of the women. This includes overseas visits as well as trips to Texas and SCI-Muncy, Pennsylvania.

“Until We Have Faces,” was created to provide a voice for women serving life and life without parole at SCI-Muncy in Pennsylvania. The original intent was to film the woman sharing her personal life journey, while incarcerated. However, we learned from the Department of Corrections that for our documentary project we would not be permitted to show the women’s faces.

Nonetheless, my colleague and I chose to forge ahead with the support of the Department of Corrections to produce the documentary. Hence the title, “Until We Have Faces.” Though we were disappointed the women’s faces were concealed, there was a surprising unexpected response. Without the opportunity to focus upon the women’s faces, our audience have shared they were more focused on the voice and words of the women.

The first group to view the documentary was an audience of approximately 150 women (serving long and life sentences), and the superintendent and staff at SCI-Muncy. The documentary was screened in the prison chapel. I recall feeling grateful and excited to see row after row of women sitting in the chapel pews, staring towards the front, waiting for the film to begin. Then, once the film had concluded, we invited women who participated in the film to come to the front and speak to the group about their personal experience while working on the documentary.

Observing women in the audience while the film was screened was extremely heartwarming. “Until We Have Faces” is not about the prison and its surroundings, it’s about hearing, listening to “the words,” which these women rarely have the chance to express beyond the prison walls.

It was the power within their words which resonated and impacted many women on that day. At the end, one woman came to me and said, “I just closed my eyes and cried tears ... because that woman was me.” This was a day that I will always cherish. Feedback regarding the documentary, came in the form of reflective letters written by women who attended that day. In closing, I give the last word to a woman serving life, who did not participate in “Until We Have Faces.”

*As a Human being first, as a Woman second and a Lifer third, it’s important that we are viewed in a light where our crimes aren’t what defines us. We as a whole are flawed and imperfect. The way we were featured was beautiful, if beauty can be seen in this setting. This documentary evokes emotion on so many fronts. It’s finally happening. Though our faces may not have been seen, our Voices were definitely heard. My reflection is now I have real hope for change.
Where in the past, there was none!*

A Human 1st, A Woman 2nd, A Lifer 3rd

<https://untilwehavefaces.info>

Reports From the Inside

Second Chances

Kevin Coleman, SCI Dallas

We, the Lifers Organization, realize that just to say you're sorry cannot begin to ease all the pain that victims' families experience. Each and every day, we talk amongst one another about remorse. There are not many ways that Lifers can persuade the victims' families that regret has overcome the stupidity that once controlled our emotions and mentality. Remorse is a key project that most Lifers' goal is to perfect.

Throughout many decades of incarceration, all we ask for is a second chance to show the victims' families, ourselves, and society that we are reliable, trustworthy, and deserving of the mercy we ask for from our communities, legislation, and representatives. To be rehabilitated is a decision-making process one must make for oneself. After 25 or 30 years of incarceration—in all actuality, a lifetime—we are not given the death penalty; therefore, we are eligible for rehabilitation.

Forty years ago, the Pennsylvania legislation prioritized rehabilitation, (which means to restore to health/normality, set straight, and give a second chance to). This gave Lifers the chance to better themselves, but also the opportunity to look forward towards a second chance at commutation. We are constantly moving in that direction, but sure, more is needed and we as a whole can identify with that.

Over the years, Lifers have become misconduct-free facilitators of programs, educators, caregivers of the elderly, problem solvers for the administration, and contributors to many more positive factors within the institution. We as Lifers are searching for support, understanding, and just a little humanity from our elected officials in our Correctional Institution Districts. If not you, who? If not now, when?

Reality Check

Earl Smith, SCI Huntingdon

At the age of 36, life seems so real to me now. It's been 15 years since I was first locked up, and all I can think about is: how did I get here? I know my actions placed me here, but at what point in my life did I go wrong?

I'm not happy with where I'm at. I pray over and over that I get a chance to do-over my mistakes. We wish right because, in the real world, there are no do-overs. Just regrets. I hurt so many people with the decisions I made. I can't help but think about the deceased. In my case, he lost his life because of me; he deserves to be here as well.

Look, no more tough guy acts from me. I wish so badly that he could be here; I wish that none of this had happened. Since I've been locked up, I've grown, grown into a man that now loves and appreciates his freedom and family. Why now? I ask myself: why, before coming to jail, did I not appreciate all that I do now? This may sound crazy, but jail has helped me become the Man I am. You can say that jail has done its job. It has shaped me into a Man and reformed me. That's what jail is for, right?

A second chance would be a beautiful thing. That would be a Dream come true for me. My Family thinks I deserve one, but I know there are some that think I should rot in here. I wish the World knew me now and not for the horrible mistake I made on that day.

Today, I believe that we should all respect each other, no matter what age, race, or religious background we come from. I believe that God has a plan for me, and I just want to be prepared for when that time comes. That's my main focus today. I can't care about what others think of me; I have to do what's best for me.

Activism

Keith Lamont Burley, Jr., SCI Forest

My name is Keith Lamont Burley, Jr., a recent graduate from the Stratford Career Institute, where I obtained my paralegal certification. I am also enrolled in the International Open University and the Prison Journalism Project, and I am in active pursuit of a Federal Pell Grant, seeking my bachelor's in sociology from Adams University. My point is that I am goal-oriented and motivated for success.

Recently, there have been a series of unreasonable interferences with my mail. Most notably, the PA Department of Corrections has entered into a contract with a corporation named "Smart Communications" located in the state of Florida. They have entered into this contract with \$15 million taxpayer dollars.

I have been receiving sterile uniform photocopies of my mail that bear no resemblance to my actual mail and are an unacceptable substitute for my "real" mail. To aggravate matters even more, the original mail is ultimately destroyed. I have initiated legal action against the DOC at case no. 167 MD 2021 in the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania. I am arguing that this policy (DC-ADM-803) is in violation of my First Amendment right to free speech and free flow of information.

The most recent infringements occurred when my "newspaper" sent to me by the Prison Journalism Project was allegedly "returned to sender" without proper notification and opportunity to appeal, pursuant to DC-ADM-803/804. "Journalism" seems to be a word those engaged in government abuse and overreach dread.

What appears more nefarious is that the infringements are improper attempts of prison officials to keep the public "blind" to what is really going on! In addition, legal mail, which was recently sent to me, was also allegedly "returned to sender" in violation of policy. As an activist and journalist, I simply give the public, who have a right to know, an x-ray vision of the "skeletal" structure of the beast, in whose belly I reside. This day and age is ripe for maximum exposure.

There is a need for an investigation into the Lawrence County jail. There has been no oversight, and the administration has done nothing except investigate their own crimes. As I write, inmates at the jail still suffer, compounded by the undeniable risk to their health due to Covid-19, which has increased the "level" of punishment to degrees not imposed by any courts.

I am respectfully requesting resources from any prison activist groups and prison abolitionists. Those who can help expose the corruption at the Lawrence County Jail. We need podcasts, newsletters, pamphlets, and leaflets to speak on behalf of Matthew Hamilton, calling for investigation into the jail.

This is truly a matter of public importance. It is going to take collective efforts to expose the corruption at the jail so that the proper authorities can curb, check, and restrain the ongoing abuses and mistreatments.

The DOC Mail System *Candis Bradshaw, SCI Muncy*

The DOC's current system of processing mail is extremely flawed. Many inmates are not receiving their mail through St. Petersburg, and it is uncertain if the problem is with the St. Petersburg facility or with the local prison. I know of one lifer whose mother sends her letters frequently, and not a single one has come through. In my case, a teacher of mine in Texas has had every single letter returned to sender. Other friends of mine have reported the same issue. Another friend in Silver Spring, MD, sent me a manilla envelope, and it has yet to appear a month later.

Furthermore, delivery of books and other items through Bellefonte is an abomination. The delivery delays affect not only inmates but staff. The program I am in waited ONE YEAR to receive clear plastic art boxes through the Bellefonte system. Another staff member reported still waiting for materials that they ordered 8 months ago.

We have no idea when our books, bought through valid vendors, will arrive. I am waiting for books to study that I need as soon as possible. They were delivered to Bellefonte almost 3 weeks ago, and I have no clue when they will clear the system.

I understand that the DOC is claiming penological interests, in that mail was delivered to a jail that contained drugs and employees were exposed. But regarding the books, they are required to come from vendors such as Amazon and Barnes & Noble. There is very little, if any, way for these items to be contaminated with drugs. Essentially, our books are being denied delivery for questionable reasons. I believe that we all -- inmates and DOC Staff -- are entitled to timely delivery of books from third-party vendors.

I would implore the DOC to seek alternate means to ensure security and safety of their employees while providing inmates and their employees timely delivery of all mail, especially that through the Smart Communications facility over 1200 miles away.

Timeliness matters.

On a personal note, one very extreme example of "living in the future" happened to me. I had forgotten to call my father one day, and I thought to myself, "There's always tomorrow. I'll talk to him then." I then lived in the future, looking forward to talking to him.

However, the "present moment" of the next day brought an en-

tirely different reality: the head chaplain and my favorite psychologist showed up at my housing unit. As anyone in prison can tell you, it's never good news when you're called to the chaplain's office, and I knew it really wasn't good when they both came to my housing unit. My dad had passed away in a hotel room in Houston waiting to get chemo treatments at MD Anderson. I did not handle it well at all because I was not grounded in the present, instead living (and looking forward) to the future.

The Business of the DOC *Mustafa a.k.a. Anthony Williams, SCI Somerset*

For years we have always known that the DOC is a business. And like any business, its sole purpose is to stay in business. So for the Department of Corrections to stay in business, they must get more prisoners and release less.

As for the first part of this tactic, politicians created a hell of a marketing strategy that said crime is on the rise; as a result, police, judges, and prosecutors made it so. We've seen an explosion of prisons built in Pennsylvania, often, as we have seen in the last 20 years, filled with people who had charges falsified by police, sanctioned by prosecutors, and rubber stamped by judges.

As for the second part, the Parole Board and its goons have written PSI reports that sometimes contain inaccurate information and go to judges who make their decisions based on these reports. Now, without even the pretense of being impartial, proposed Act No. 59 Senate Bill No. 411, 2021 PA AL559 in section 27 says the powers and duties of the Board would fall under the DOC. Now of course they are allegedly still independent, but how truly independent are you when the DOC creates your budget? The Parole Board can continue to keep people in prison who reach their minimum with the prison's recommendation in order to maintain the percentage the DOC needs to remain in business.

Wow! Not a mystery -- the DOC is still in business and thriving. Almost every year their budget goes up, even though we are often locked down due to COVID. So-called sick staff going out and in cell groups. And yet we are considered the criminals? So what is the solution? Reread what was just said and you will know what it is.

Fight the Good Fight *Wayne Thomas, SCI Albion*

There must be a modification to attitudes from PA reform activists. Those desirous of advancing restorative justice stage acts of civil disobedience and lead protests against prison expansion, but no advocacy group can be found networking behind the walls for greater prisoner participation in their social media campaigns against corporations profiting from prison expansion. Like a double edged sword, no grassroots groups support empowering a sleeping giant--when will Pennsylvania prisoners rise up in nonviolent protests--or a mutual alliance to those outside the prison walls at the least!

Prison Industrial Complex fundraising is constantly paid to legislators, the judiciary, or lobbying. A different methodology of prison reform, "like towards the establishing of a nat'l. prisoners defense fund" for the Human Rights Community-Gentrifi-

cation-Accountability area of research is desperately needed to prevent Pennsylvania's killing of a significant amount of people, at youth offenders' ages, and to stop their replicating of the neo age of human chattel slavery imprisonment system. With a national defense fund, registrations and policymakers who are stockholders or lobby recipients within the PIC regime could be identified and publicly known (nationwide). Inroads to raising the political consciousness of PA, reform activists must be more money oriented, working with the beast to achieve this subverted goal.

Although Pennsylvania and most states do not have a specific 85% Truth in Sentencing law, the federal grant contains there are provisions that are widely used by PA to deny offenders release upon serving a half of minimum sentence for parole eligibility. This defacto 85% practice reverts to keeping the largest population incarcerated. This movement of money is what fuels the epidemic of social dysfunction, violence, and mass incarceration rather than a reduction of prison expansion.

Which is why I am an Abolitionist. Thoroughly anti-imperialist and committed to the Abolishment of Prisons movement! Equally, so, are my salutations to all comrades in the struggle for national liberation against the U.S. Prison System. Stay strong my brothers and sisters and continue to "fight the good fight."

Ineffective Curriculums *Ronald Smith, SCI Fayette*

The PA DOC states, "Our mission is to reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change."

One would think that with this bold Mission Statement, those in charge of DOC Education would be doing everything possible to live up to their promise. But, contradiction is and has been the norm for the DOC. (That's a story for another time).

The National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER), which has a good curriculum, notified everyone in the construction industry they were moving to online testing. Despite DOC Education being aware of this, they refused to address this issue in a timely manner. In other words, they didn't come up with an alternative curriculum for those of us relying on taking those essential tests that would enable us to be further trained and eventually gainfully employed.

SCI Mahanoy is doing online testing, so why not the other SCIs? The Curriculum Coordinator has no clue about the latest technology that'll assist us in GETTING BETTER, BEING BETTER, and DOING BETTER, or he, too, has that same blatant indifference when it comes to advocating the necessary vocational training of those of us needing to and wanting to "GET BETTER, BE BETTER, and DO BETTER."

Now, we know the pandemic has wreaked havoc and continues to ride roughshod over everybody and everything, but people, places, and things are beginning to open. Yes, even the DOC.

Many instructors throughout the DOC, along with their Vocational Programs, are being hamstrung due to ineffective curriculums and blatant indifference. This indifference towards proper curriculums for those of us re-entering society sets up the possibility of having a greater recidivism percentage, contradicting the DOC's Mission Statement.

I advise you all as a group, as well as individuals, who desire to leave these penitentiaries/prisons/institutions better off than when you came in, to write the DOC Director of Education, DOC Director, Bureau of Re-Entry Coordination, and Deputy Secretary for Office of Re-Entry PBPP. After all, the resolution to solving any issue is communication; so, my fellow convicts, inmates, prisoners, residents, and instructors, by all means, please communicate your concerns. Let them know an "Ineffective Curriculum" leads to "Ineffective Ex-offenders" being back in a society already burdened with much contradiction, controversy, and ineffectiveness.

All About the Benjamins *James Brown, SCI Phoenix*

Take a look at the anemic response of Pennsylvania during this COVID pandemic.

The Board of Pardons handling of commutation of sentences illustrates how far away this state is from any meaningful prison reform. Year after year, reforms concerning life without the possibility of parole, such as Bill SB-135, are reintroduced by Senator Street, only to sit on the table without any action. No votes. No committee reviews. NOTHING!

Last December, I wrote to the Right to Know office and asked how much money it takes to incarcerate one prisoner in PA? Their answer: In fiscal year 2020, the cost for the DOC was \$51,674 per inmate per year or \$141.57 per day! Any information in response to fiscal year 2020-2021 from the county or federal government—your request is denied! There are over 5,000 prisoners serving defacto death penalty sentences in this department of corruption! I wonder what would transpire with this stalled legislation if the Lifer population ever decided not to share their concrete cage space!

Would that extra \$51,000 denied to the DOC change the laws to commutations? Would parole be approved and passed through the House and Senate! Prisons are a big business—IT'S ALL ABOUT THE BENJAMINS!!!

Tough Love *Brian Fuller, Torres Unit, Texas*

It is with a heavy heart that I am forced to write this. The virus has returned with a vengeance. Our lives have been jeopardized by the malice and negligence of others.

We've all been through this before. Except this time, the feeling is not that warm fuzzy deja-vu one seems to find when they wax nostalgic. No. This time it is as if we've been chained to the train wreck, with no choice but to ride it out in horror because we know this is going to hurt. I've been thinking over and over in my mind about what, if anything, I could have done differently; or more, better, new, whatever. All I come up with is questions. I feel

like a guy bailing water out of a canoe. There is no land in sight. Then I look over at the person with me to watch them furiously swing an ax at the flimsy bottom.

I'm supposed to be writing to my professor. He was so kind to come here and try to give us something we couldn't have attained otherwise. I wanted to thank him for all the hoops he had to jump through to simply be here. I need to tell him that it wasn't all for nothing. We are still alive. I think I can still get word to the others.

I know anger is not the most intelligent of emotions. Yet, I'm still glad to have it. Perhaps it keeps me alive. It seems a futile waste of precious time to spend it arguing with them about whether or not they can kill us. All I'm saying is that I'm not just going to sit here and watch them do it!

I won't give up or give in. I DO have a say in this. They want us dead. I want us ALIVE.

We Care Also
Earl Smith, SCI Huntingdon

As a Lifer, I would like to share with you my thoughts.

To all of those who have been a victim or have a loved one who is the victim of a crime, I would like to apologize on behalf of myself and others for all of the hurt and pain that we have caused you and your families. Today I believe there's a disconnect between us in prison and those in the free world. There are a lot of us who have finally woken up and realized that our old ways of thinking are not acceptable. Now with an understanding of how our world really should operate, we start wishing that we could do things all over, but unfortunately we can't.

The answer that I came up with, for not being able to relive or undo horrible mistakes, is simple: Don't do them! If we start to look at us as a whole, as one Race, we should have love and respect for one another, no matter what religion or color a person is. When we learn to really love ourselves and those around us, that's when we start to see the wrong in the decisions that we're making and finally begin to understand that a change is deeply needed within.

Here's just some thoughts on things that I felt like sharing with you, so hopefully you can find use for this and share it with those who need it.

Civil Rights for Native Americans
Marvin Running River Banks, SCI Benner

It's your neighborhood friendly Indigenous Warrior "Running River Banks." It's been awhile since I've written to Graterfriends, and I must say that a lot has happened. Consider this as a little update.

For the last approximately 2 years, I've been in another litigation battle with the DOC over us: Native American and Indigenous peoples' rights. As many of you may have heard and seen in my first civil lawsuit victory, I was able to win our rights to perform sweat lodge ceremonies throughout the Pennsylvania state prison

system. But now, I would like to proudly inform Native American and Indigenous inmates here in Pennsylvania that we will now be able to have items like prayer pipes, hand drums, and other items considered sacred and a part of our sacred bundles in our cells. These items will not be purchased but will instead have to be donated from your tribe or Native communities on the outside and then approved by your Native chaplain to see if you are qualified to have such an item; say, it's a sacred pipe.

I have successfully moved the DOC's lawyer to consider a settlement of this lawsuit titled Marvin Banks v. Ulli et al. No.1:2020cv0134, and I am proud to announce a settlement day is in the works. I will keep everyone informed. But remember: just because we have achieved our right to perform sweat lodge ceremonies and have these sacred items so we can pray in our cells, it doesn't mean that there still isn't work to be done. So, let's continue to liberate ourselves for justice's sake and for the sake of the rehabilitation that fits with our traditions and customs.

Sanctioned Robbery
Scott Yohn, SCI Somerset

Can you imagine working for an hour just to buy a ramen soup? How about three days for an E-cig that lasts a day? A month and a half for a pair of sneakers? What about six months for a shoddy TV no one has ever heard of that only lasts for four or five years? I can and do.

Walmart has RCA TVs the same size as ours for under \$100 and sneakers for far less than the \$42 that our cheapest pair runs. So, why can't the powers that be get those of us who make twenty cents an hour better deals? Not everyone has family on the streets who can send them money.

I also want to call out the people who own the company doing the quarterly packages. They should be in here for robbing people too. Why can't those in charge find a company like Dollar General to do the packages? They have hundreds of items for a dollar in both food and cosmetics? I got a package at Christmas and instead of being happy, I was pissed off at the way they ripped off my girlfriend.

Someone could do something about all of this if they wanted to.

The Evils of Dauphin County Prison
Johnnie McCollum, Dauphin County Prison

The whole 18 months I've been here, I've been quarantined: no schooling, no programs, no religious services. The gym was given for a month, but was taken away as well. Due to being short staffed, since the Department doesn't have enough guards to efficiently run the prison, we have been locked up the majority of the month. We are left to suffer.

Dauphin County Prison has become a 23 and 45, counting the 15 minute shower. Sometimes we aren't afforded the opportunity to clean our cells due to the lockdowns. Whole housing units are sick and medical isn't testing us. The Department is playing a numbers game where they give the public this perception like they got COVID under control when, in all reality, they don't. Their numbers are good because they aren't testing us. In the

middle of a pandemic we can't practice precaution by keeping our living quarters clean because sometimes we are denied cleaning products.

You would think at a time like this the Department would attempt to put forth some flexibility and provide incentives for the general population, but instead they just withhold services. This is oppressive and counterproductive, and it magnifies the pre-existing depression of already being confined under these conditions. The department is obstructing the educational growth of its prison populations by not allowing us to order books. None of us can subscribe to Prison Legal News, Bayview, or Socialist Viewpoint. I am in the process of putting in 1983 to get rid of this policy. The struggle is real, and I encourage you to meet oppression and address it wherever you see it.

Comrade freedom.

All of those who have lost their lives behind bars are in the Prison Society's thoughts.

In Memoriam: Friends at SCI Phoenix

Thank you to Philip Saeda for sending us some of the names of those who have recently passed at SCI Phoenix.

*Robert Rovinski
Robert Leggieri
Shawn Chance
William Trowery
Charles Cook
Anthony Fiebiger*

In Memoriam: Jeffrey Armolt In Memory of Yet Another Unnecessarily Fallen Brother

Barry Crespo, SCI Mahony

Jeffrey Armolt passed the end of March, 2022 at SCI Mercer from cancer. He was dealing with illness for about two years before the medical department found the cancer, at which time they put him on chemotherapy and other medications, but it spread quickly over the next few months so they transferred him to SCI Coal Township for treatment and then to Mercer.

He was in for 20 years, 13 of which were served at SCI Mahanoy which is where I got to know him. He worked on the Electric crew most of that time and a small amount in the CI shop. Those who knew him knew he was a jailhouse lawyer and a good man who would help just about anyone who'd ask him. He was my celly for two years before transferring out and my friend for the entire 13 years at SCI Mahanoy.

I guess the thing that bothered me the most is that he was five years past his minimum and even though they knew he was terminal, they didn't allow that man to go home and die in peace with his family around him. His family fought to get him out on the compassionate release program but they, whoever they even are, didn't budge and denied them. Something is seriously wrong with this broken system and nothing seems to be done. Where is the accountability? Who exactly do they answer to? It's sad to think that man could have and should have died in his home around his family in peace and not in a cold prison being five years past his minimum sentence.

Jeff will be missed by many. His last email to me when he could still write was, "I'll see you on the other side." He knew he was dying. Yes Jeff, I will see you on the other side for sure!

Legislative Highlights

PPS is partnering with FAMM, ACLU of PA, Americans for Prosperity, the Commonwealth Foundation and others to support positive reforms. In January, representatives from all five of these organizations spent a day at the State Capitol sharing their priorities with lawmakers and expressing their bipartisan support for criminal justice reform. For information on other currently pending criminal justice reform legislation, see previous issue.

May 2022

It is election season in the state legislature. Primary Election Day is May 17, and the House and Senate are in session only 3 days in May because many are campaigning. In June, lawmakers will be in Harrisburg for 15 days to pass a finalized budget. Then, they break until September. Remember, it is a long road for a bill to become law: it must be approved by committees, the House, the Senate, and signed by the Governor. Note that many bills have multiple co-sponsors; only the prime or first-listed sponsor is included here.

Mandatory minimum sentences – HB 1587 (Rep. Brown) and HB 1590 (Rep. Stephens)

HB 1587 would create two-, five-, or 10-year mandatory minimum sentences for people who possess guns and have a felony record, depending on prior convictions. HB 1590 would require courts to impose the lesser of 5 years or the minimum sentence under the sentencing guidelines if the person is convicted of a crime of violence, armed drug offense, or felon-in-gun-possession.

The bills are out of the House Rules Committee and actively on the House Voting Calendar. They could advance at any time during session. FAMM opposes the bills and has asked Governor Wolf to veto any bill containing mandatory minimums.

Life Without Parole Reform – SB 135 (Sen. Street) and HB 135 (Rep. Dawkins)

SB 135 would, if passed, provide parole eligibility after 20, 25, 30, or 35 years in prison to adults and juveniles convicted of first- and second-degree murder, depending on age and victim status. HB 135 would, if passed, make people serving life sentences (except those convicted of murder of a law enforcement officer) eligible for parole by deleting the words “without parole” from existing laws. Neither bill has received votes or review by committees since referral in Feb. and Oct. 2021.

Parole related bills -- SB 835/HB 2347 (Sen. Street and Rep. Kinsey), HB 518 (Rep. DeLuca), HB 2030 (Rep. Mihalek)

SB 835 would, if passed, create a parole mechanism for certain ill and/or aging prisoners to petition the Parole Board for release. The medical parole provision would apply to people who have a qualifying serious medical issue and a weakened ability to function in prison. The geriatric parole provision is separate, and would apply to people who are 55+, have served half their time (or 25 years, whichever is less), and the Parole Board agrees that there is no danger to the public. HB 2347 is an identical House companion bill to SB 835.

HB 2030 would, if passed, create credits toward time off one’s minimum prison sentence upon completion of educational programs (for example, there would be a 90-day credit for getting a GED, 120-day credit for a diploma, 180-day credit for an advanced degree, etc.). The bill excludes certain types of crimes, including murder, rape, etc. It would also create a pilot program to study how many people in prison and on probation have learning disabilities and need additional supports.

HB 518 would, if passed, require “repeat violent offenders” to do 85% of their time before being eligible for parole.

None of these bills have received any votes or review by committees yet.

Additionally, Rep. Kail has announced his intent to introduce medical and family hardship release legislation inspired by the federal First Step Act, which should be introduced soon. FAMM is working closely with lawmakers on these issues as part of its Second Chance Agenda.

Clemency reform – SB 694 (Sen. Bartolotta) and HB 1719 (Rep. McClinton)

SB 694 would, if passed, begin the process of changing the constitution so that the governor can grant clemency whenever the Board of Pardons recommends a person for clemency by a vote of 4-1 (currently there is a unanimous requirement). HB 1719 would do the same but with a 3-2 vote, enabling more people to be considered for clemency. The bills have not received any votes or review by committees. FAMM recently issued a public letter to Governor Wolf and other officials calling for clemency expansion and improvement. The letter was reprinted in the last issue of this newsletter.

Prison Conditions – HB 1419 (Rep. Jones), HB 1283 (Rep. Bullock), SB 686 (Sen. Muth), HB 1037 (Rep. Davis), HB 1753 (Rep. Brown)

HB 1419 would, if passed, prohibit shackling and solitary confinement of pregnant women, require corrections officers interacting with pregnant women to have trauma-informed care training, prohibit full body searches of females by male guards, provide an appropriate amount of feminine hygiene products at no cost to women, and provide additional visitation between primary custodial parents and minor children. HB 1283 would, if passed, provide incarcerated parents with one free phone call or email per month to each of their children. SB 686, if passed, would ban the use of solitary confinement and provide alternative disciplinary measures, such as limiting visitation, recreation, or work. It would allow confinement to a person’s own cell. HB 1037 would ban the use of solitary on pregnant women, LGBTQ+ people, and people who are 21 or less, or 70 plus, with a 15-day cap on solitary use.

PPS is partnering with FAMM, ACLU of PA, Americans for Prosperity, the Commonwealth Foundation and others to support positive reforms. In January, representatives from all five of these organizations spent a day at the State Capitol sharing their priorities with lawmakers and expressing their bipartisan support for criminal justice reform. For information on other currently pending criminal justice reform legislation, see previous issue.

May 2022

HB 1753 would, if passed, end the \$5 medical copay in state prisons and prohibit the Dept. of Corrections from charging incarcerated people fees for medical services. These bills have not received committee votes yet. Note that FAMM and the Prison Society are working on multiple avenues to reduce or eliminate the copay, and issued a public letter in March asking Secretary Little to end the copays, which is reprinted in this newsletter.

Other items of interest – HB 706 (Rep. McClinton), SB 104 (Sen. Street), HB 1888 (Rep. Rabb)

HB 706 and SB 104 would require that incarcerated people are counted in their home districts in the U.S. Census, instead of their prison district (a practice known as “prison gerrymandering”). HB 706 advanced out of committee in Sept. with a recommendation to also count college students and those in local jails. It is on the House tabled bill calendar, but could be called for a House vote at any time during session. SB 104 has not gotten a committee vote yet.

HB 1888 would allow lawmakers to request that the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing prepare a demographic impact statement for any law amending the crimes or judicial code, in recognition of racial disparities in imprisonment. The bill has not gotten a committee vote yet.



Birthday Recognition

a needed retraction

Dear Friends,

Our office recently found a discrepancy with the subscriber-birthday-list. We would like to acknowledge that some of the birthdays printed in the previous issues, January & February and March & April, may have been incorrect, and some of our subscribers may have also been left off the list entirely.

We are working to fix our list and will include this issue’s birthdays, as well as July & August, in the next issue. We are aware of how important this list is for many of you, and it is our goal to keep it in the future issues.

In the meantime, the Graterfriends team wishes a “Happy Birthday!” to anyone celebrating their birthday in May and June. We apologize for any disappointment or confusion, and thank you for sticking with us.

From,
Noelle

Reader Survey

*We welcome comments and suggestions from all readers. Please complete this form and mail it to Pennsylvania Prison Society.
Prison Society*

230 South Broad Street, Suite 605

Philadelphia, PA 19102

How would you rate the diversity of Graterfriends' contributors? Would you like to see more representation in any categories?

In preparation for our 2022 creative issue, what themes or artwork would you like to see included? Please submit either your own work or suggestions below.

Temple IRB Approved

05/02/2022

RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title: Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on visitation experiences in PA correctional facilities
Protocol No.: 29131
Investigator: Jamie Fader
Daytime Phone Number: 215-870-2821
Email: jfader@temple.edu

RESEARCH CONSENT

You are being asked for your consent to take part in a research study. This consent document describes the information that we believe most people need to decide whether to participate.

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

We are seeking to better understand your experiences with both virtual and in-person visiting services, especially in relation to new restrictions and changes made in response to COVID-19. Your responses to this survey will be used in a research study being conducted in partnership with Temple University and the Pennsylvania Prison Society (PPS).

How long will I be in this research? What happens to me if I agree to participate?

If you decide to participate, you will complete a survey that should take between 20-40 minutes. Your participation in this survey will not have an effect on your parole.

What are the risks of this study?

There is a low risk of breach of confidentiality. Your participation in this research will be held strictly confidential; however, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. You do not have to answer any questions that make you too uncomfortable.

What happens to the information collected for this research?

The survey should be mailed to PPS, who will remove the envelope before sharing with Temple research staff. The only identifying information remaining will be your institution name and unit type. The findings from this study will be shared in a future issue of the Graterfriends newsletter. A report of the results will also be distributed to PPS and the Department of Corrections. We may also publish the results of this research. All results will be shared in the aggregate (i.e., numbers, percents) and any identifying information will remain confidential.

Who can answer my questions about this research?

If you have questions, concerns, or complaints, contact the research team at the phone number or email listed above on the first page. This research is being overseen by an Institutional Review Board ("IRB"). An IRB is a group of people who perform independent review of research studies. You may talk to them at (215) 707-3390 or irb@temple.edu if:

- 1) you have questions, concerns, or complaints that are not being answered by the researchers;
- 2) you have questions about your rights as a research participant.

Version date: May 5, 2022

*We are seeking to better understand your experiences with both virtual and in-person visiting services, especially in relation to new restrictions and changes made in response to COVID-19. Please **read** the form on the following page before beginning this survey.*

*Please fill out this survey and mail it back to us at:
230 South Broad Street, Suite 605, Philadelphia, PA 19102.*

1. Have you received a video or in-person visit in the past year?

- A. Yes, a video visit. B. Yes, an in-person visit. C. Yes, both a video and in-person visit. D. No.

2. On average, how often do you receive a video visit?

- A. Daily B. Several times/week C. Once a week D. Several times/month E. Once a month
F. Every few months G. Rarely H. Never.

3. Would you like to receive more video visits?

- A. Yes B. No

4. Who has visited you using the video visitation mode? Please circle all that apply.

- A. Mother B. Father C. Spouse or partner D. Child E. Sister F. Brother
G. Grandmother H. Grandfather I. Friend J. Other (please tell us what their relation is to you) _____
K. Not Applicable

5. How satisfied are you with the current video visitation experience?

- A. Very Satisfied B. Satisfied C. Somewhat Satisfied D. Not Satisfied E. Not Applicable

6. Please rate your experiences with video visits on each of the following areas on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=poor; 5=best):

Convenience	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Video quality	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Sound quality	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Wait time	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Visiting area	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Interaction with staff	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Overall satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

7. What issues have you experienced while using video visits? Circle all that apply.

- A. Bad service/connection B. Image quality C. Sound quality D. Limited access to kiosk E. Freezing
F. Inconvenient/inadequate times available G. Difficulty scheduling H. Visitors' lack of access to necessary technology (internet access, webcam, smart phone) I. No issues J. Not applicable

8. Have your loved ones experienced any of the following issues with accessing the video visits during the past year? Circle all that apply.

- A. Not having a computer B. Not having a webcam C. Not having a smart phone
D. Lack of high-speed internet access E. Unable to afford fees F. Other (please specify): _____

9. Which of the issues that you circled in the previous question are the biggest barrier(s) to you receiving video visits?

- A. Lack of access to computer B. Lack of webcam C. Lack of a smart phone D. Lack of internet access
- E. Cost of a video visit F. Other (please explain): _____

10. Have in-person visits resumed at your facility?

- A. Yes B. No C. Not Applicable

11. On average, how often do you receive an in-person visit?

- A. Daily B. Several times/week C. Once a week D. Several times/month E. Once a month
- F. Every few months G. Rarely H. Never

12. Would you like to receive more in-person visits?

- A. Yes B. No C. Not Applicable

13. How satisfied are you with the current in-person visitation experience?

- A. Very Satisfied B. Satisfied C. Somewhat Satisfied D. Not Satisfied E. Not Applicable

14. Who has visited you using the in-person visitation mode in the past year? Please circle all that apply.

- A. Mother B. Father C. Spouse or partner D. Child E. Sister F. Brother
- G. Grandmother H. Grandfather I. Friend J. Other: (please tell us what their relation is to you)
- _____ K. Not Applicable

15. Please rate your experiences with in-person visits on each of the following areas on a scale of 1 to 5 (1=poor; 5=best):

Convenience	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Scheduling	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Wait time	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Visiting area	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Interaction with staff	1	2	3	4	5	N/A
Overall satisfaction	1	2	3	4	5	N/A

16. Which of the following issues are the biggest barrier(s) to you receiving in-person visits?

- A. Cost of visit B. Transportation issues C. Distance to facility D. Lack of childcare
- E. Scheduling conflicts F. Restrictive visitation policies G. No one to visit H. Other

17. If you have received both video and in-person visits, which type of visitation do you prefer?

- A. Video B. In-person C. No preference D. Not Applicable

18. If you have not received a visit in the past year, do you have a desire to receive a visit?

- A. Yes B. No C. Not Applicable

If you selected that you would not want to receive visits (and would like to explain why), please explain briefly:

19. If you have not received a visit in the past year, what has kept you from receiving an in-person visit? Circle all that apply

- A. Cost of visit B. Transportation issues C. Distance D. Lack of childcare
E. No one to visit F. Don't want to receive a visit G. Other H. Not Applicable

If you selected other, please explain briefly in your own words:

20. How satisfied have you been with communication about visitation policy changes from staff?

- A. Very Satisfied B. Satisfied C. Somewhat Satisfied D. Not Satisfied E. Not Applicable

21. How have you learned about visitation policy changes?

- A. Posted bulletins B. Graterfriends newsletter C. Word of mouth D. Family/loved ones
E. Other (please specify): _____

22. What are your concerns about the current visiting options available to you?

23. What do you think would improve the visiting options available to you?

24. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your visitation experiences?

All identifying information will be kept confidential.

25. What facility are you in?

26. How long have you been in this facility?

27. Are you in the RHU? Yes No

28. What is your housing unit?

29. Security classification?

30. Age:

31. Gender:

32. Race/Ethnicity:

33. What date did you fill out this survey?

Thank you for your feedback. We will share a report of our findings based on your responses in a future issue of Graterfriends.

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May & June 2022

Graterfriends

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